DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 043 SO 031 726

AUTHOR	Kinate, Joanna
TITLE	Improving Music Reading Skills among Second Grade Students.
PUB DATE	1999-12-00
NOTE	65p.; Master's Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Action Research; Classroom Research; Classroom Techniques; Grade 2; *Music; Music Activities; *Music Reading; *Music Techniques; Primary Education; Program Development; *Skill Development

ABSTRACT

This project describes a program designed to improve the music reading abilities of second grade children. The intention is to discover the best possible method of teaching students basic rhythmic and melodic skills. When combined, these skills will not only increase students' understanding of the language of music, but will also increase self-esteem in students when they experience greater success in the classroom. This study was made up of second grade students of a large elementary school located in a middle class community near a large Midwestern metropolitan area. The lack of music reading skills was observed by the music teacher and documented through student surveys. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students lack basic skills involving rhythm, melody, harmony, and keyboard. Students often struggle through elementary music by imitating, rather than actually reading. A suggested solution to this problem is to discover the method of teaching music reading that will improve the greatest number of skills for the greatest number of students. Chapters include: (1) "Problem Statement and Context"; (2) "Problem Documentation"; (3) "The Solution Strategy"; and (4) "Project Results." Appendixes contain surveys and additional information. (Contains 26 references and 14 tables.) (Author/BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

SO

ED 440 043

IMPROVING MUSIC READING SKILLS AMONG SECOND GRADE STUDENTS

Joanna Kinate

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joanna Kinate

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Saint Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field Based Masters Program

Chicago, Illinois

December 1999

SO 031 726

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

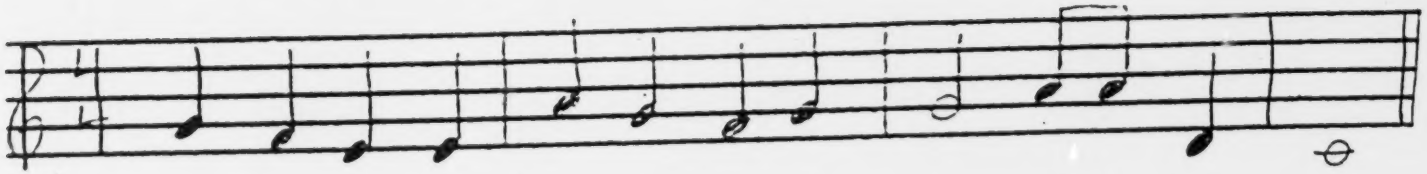
SIGNATURE PAGE

This Project was approved by

Marsha Hanna / Susan Seaver
Advisor

Margaret H. Sennhauser Ed.D.
Advisor

Beverly Gulley Ph.D
Dean, School of Education


I love my frog. I feed him flies. He also likes leaves.

Abstract

This report describes a program designed to improve the music reading abilities of second grade children. The researcher's intention is to discover the best possible method of teaching students basic rhythmic and melodic skills. When combined, these skills will not only increase students' understanding of the language of music, but will also increase self-esteem in students who experience greater success in the classroom. Furthermore, students who are given the tools to read music generally find the practice more enjoyable and personally rewarding.

The targeted population consisted of children in the second grade of a large elementary school. The school is located in a middle class community near a large metropolitan area of a midwestern state. The lack of music reading skills was observed by the music teacher and documented through student surveys.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students lack the basic skills involving rhythm, melody, harmony, and keyboard skills. Members of the music staff theorized that failure in middle or high school has roots in lack of elementary music reading skills. Review of the literature suggests that students often struggle through elementary music by imitating rather than actually reading. By giving students the basic building blocks of notation and comprehension, it is believed that future efforts on the part of the children will be more successful.

A review of solution strategies suggested by researchers in the field of education, combined with an analysis of the problem resulted in the development of a second grade program designed to discover the method of teaching music reading that will improve the greatest number of skills for the greatest number of students. The music teacher will chart progress and student growth throughout the course of the study.

Post intervention data indicated that a method of instruction involving intensive keyboard study increased students' knowledge of music reading skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE – PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT.....1

General Statement of the Problem.....1

Immediate Problem Context.....1

The Surrounding Community.....5

National Context of the Problem.....6

CHAPTER TWO – PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION.....9

Problem Evidence.....9

Probable Causes.....13

CHAPTER THREE – THE SOLUTION STRATEGY.....15

Literature Review.....15

Project Objectives and Processes.....26

Project Action Plan.....26

Methods of Assessment.....27

CHAPTER FOUR – PROJECT RESULTS.....28

Historical Description of the Intervention.....28

Presentation and Analysis of Results.....31

Conclusions and Recommendations.....33

REFERENCES.....35

APPENDICES

Appendix A.....37

Appendix B.....39

Appendix C.....42

Appendix D.....44

CHAPTER I

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students of the targeted second grade class exhibit poor music reading skills which interfere with musical growth. Evidence of the existence of this problem includes both student assessment and teacher observation.

Immediate Problem Context

This research study focuses on four second grade classes which are part of a large elementary school. The elementary school is part of a large unit district consisting of one early learning center, five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. This district is located in a large metropolitan area of a midwestern state and is bordered by rural communities.

Staff

The total enrollment of this school is 479 students. There are 20 regular classroom teachers, and one self-contained special education teacher aided by a part-time speech pathologist. There is one music teacher, one art teacher, and one physical education teacher.

There are also two additional special education teachers who function as facilitators to the remaining special education population. Also, the school employs a full-time social worker, school psychologist, and speech pathologist.

Physical Setting

The school was originally built in the 1960's with additional classrooms and a new gymnasium constructed in the mid-1990's. The school is organized on a neighborhood theme, where each wing will contain one classroom each of grades one through five.

Demographics of School Population

The school population is 76.6 percent White, 0.6 percent Black, 20.9 percent Hispanic, 1.7 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.2 percent Native American. With a total enrollment of 4602 students, the district population is 84.2 percent White, 0.7 percent Black, 1.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1 percent Native American. The site houses an ESL program containing mostly Spanish-speaking students. This accounts for the significant percentage of Hispanic Students.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American	Total Enrollment
School	76.6 %	0.6 %	20.9 %	1.7 %	0.2 %	479
District	84.2 %	0.7 %	13.8 %	1.1 %	0.1 %	4672

Table 1 Demographic Data

In the school, 15.7 percent of students are low-income and 15.4 percent are limited-English proficient. In the district, 15.0 percent of students are low-income and 6.7 percent of students are limited-English proficient. Low-income students are from families receiving public aid, living in foster homes and being supported by public funds, or eligible to receive free or

reduced-price lunches. Limited-English proficient students are those who are part of the schools' ESL (English as a Second Language) program.

	Low-Income students	Limited-English proficient students
School	15.7 %	15.4 %
District	15.0 %	6.7 %

Table 2 Income Level

Student attendance, mobility, and chronic truancy are shown below. The school attendance is 96.1 percent, mobility is 16.4 percent, and chronic truancy is 0.0 percent. There are no chronic truants at the school. The district attendance is 94.7 percent, mobility is 13.3 percent, and chronic truancy is 0.4 percent. There are 20 chronic truants in the district.

	Attendance	Student Mobility	Chronic Truancy	Chronic Truants
School	96.1 %	16.4 %	0.0 %	0
District	94.7 %	13.3 %	0.4 %	20

Table 3 Attendance, Mobility, and Truancy

The following table shows the average class sizes for benchmarks grades one and three in the school and in the district. In the school, the average number of students in a first grade classroom is 23.0 students and the average number of students in a third grade classroom is 25.3 students. In the district, the average number of students in a first grade classroom is 21.5 and the average number of students in a third grade classroom is 24.7.

	Average number of students in Grade One	Average number of students in Grade Three
School	23.0	25.3
District	21.5	24.7

Table 4 Class Size

The racial/ethnic background and gender of teachers in the school's district is shown below. The district employs 99.1 percent White, 0.0 percent Black, 0.6 Hispanic, 0.3 percent

Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.0 percent Native American. With 317 faculty members employed, 26.7 percent are male and 73.3 percent are female.

	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian/P. Islander	Native American	Male	Female	Total Number
District	99.1 %	0.0 %	0.6 %	0.3 %	0.0 %	26.7 %	73.3 %	317

Table 5 Teacher Demographics

In the table below, teacher and administrator characteristics are illustrated. In the district, the average teaching experience is 13.6 years, and 54.5 percent of teachers in the district hold bachelor's degrees, while 45.5 percent of teachers hold Master's degrees. The pupil teacher ratio is 18.9:1, and the pupil-administrator ration is 236.5:1.

	Average Teaching Experience	Teachers w/ Bachelor's Degree	Teachers w/ Master's & Above	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Pupil-Administrator Ratio
District	13.6 years	54.5 %	45.5 %	18.9:1	236.5:1

Table 6 Teacher Experience and Education

In the chart of average financial indicators found below, both teacher and administrator salaries are listed, as well as the operating expenditure per pupil. The average teacher salary is $41,745, while the average administrator salary is $74,123. The district's operating expenditure per pupil is $6239.

	Teacher Salary 1998-99	Administrator Salary 1998-99	Operating Expenditure Per Pupil 1998-99
District	$41, 745	$74,123	$6239

Table 7 Salaries and Expenditures

School Program

The school provides a broad educational program for students in grades one through five. Critical thinking, hands-on learning, and character education are emphasized. In addition to the

regular academic curriculum, Title One, special education, gifted education, and computer education are available to all students.

The music curriculum at the school utilizes the Silver Burdett series entitled *The Music Connection*. A classroom media center and use of current music technology enhance the curriculum. All students are required to participate in at least one music program during the course of one school year. Also, most fifth graders are members of either the Fifth Grade Chorus or Fifth Grade Band. Many students are members of both organizations. These students are required to perform more frequently.

The Surrounding Community

Size and Administrative Structure of the District

The school is located in a large school district which is continuing to grow. There are 4672 students enrolled in the district's early learning center, five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The community also supports a K-12 parochial school system.

The administrative structure of the district consists of a school board, superintendent, and principal for the early learning center, each of the elementary schools, and each middle school. The high school employs one principal and two assistant principals.

Community Demographics

The school used in the study is part of a community unit school district located in a northwest suburb of a large metropolitan area. The district serves a 10.7 square mile area with a population of 18,207 people. The per capita income of the county is $22,753 with a median household income of $51,207.

Community Support for the School

The school is supported by its own Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This organization is very active, providing both financial assistance and parent volunteers to the school community.

Also, the school has an eight-member committee representing the Community Music Boosters. This organization conducts fund-raisers for the music program at the school and also supports those students who choose to take part in musical activities.

National Context of the Problem

William Thomson states in his book Introduction to Music Reading Concepts and Applications that "the most fundamental requirement for musicianship is the ability to translate the symbols of music notation into the sounds the composer intended—the ability to read music" (vii). In his book, Teaching Music in the Secondary Schools, Charles R. Hoffer (1991) reports that according to The National Assessment of Education, only between eight and 15 percent of all thirteen year-olds and ten to 18 percent of all seventeen year-olds could individually sight-read a very simple phrase of music without words (p. 155). In a recent article, Mary Ellen Junda states that a main variable for students' lack of music reading skills is the "lack of music readiness skills" they are taught as young children (p. 37). Many students throughout elementary school participate in music class by listening and repeating, or by rote. They never learn to actually read the system of symbols and letters that form the language of music. Quite simply, they just "follow along."

Students do not intentionally imitate. They truly believe they are "reading the music" as they are taught. Many will leave their general music program and go on to middle school without any idea of how to read a note of music. In middle school, more is demanded of students' music reading abilities. Unfortunately, because of the level of difficulty of middle school music, students who can't compete become frustrated and discouraged. These (possibly talented) non-music readers often quit fine arts programs because they can't keep up with the music readers.

However, if teachers can help students understand the system of letters and symbols and make these meaningful to students, perhaps students would not quit. If students can learn not to imitate, perhaps they will be more successful music students in the future.

One main problem, as stated by Florence Windebank (1966), is that music teachers often make the mistake of focusing too much attention on single notes when instructing beginning students in pitch and rhythm. Even after much time and practice, students are only able to spell out and sing the simplest of tunes. They tend to be completely unaware of the phrase structure or the meaning of the passage.

Author Charles W. Hefferman (1968) describes another problem. Children are often expected to be familiar with the intricacies of printed music notation without having first been exposed to a variety of musical experiences. No child will be interested in solving a solfege problem or a rhythm puzzle without having first enjoyed music on other levels. Hefferman states that "programs of music reading are often begun too early, before the child has gained a sufficient variety and depth of musical experience" (p. 10).

Furthermore, reading music must be equally fun and educational. As Madeleine Carabo-Cone and Beatrice Royt (1953) suggest, if music reading skills are not presented both on the child's cognitive level and with excitement, the methods will not find success.

This research project attempts to present music reading strategies that are both developmentally appropriate and fun. Students in the targeted second grades will stretch their knowledge and creativity. These grade level appropriate activities, when combined with fun and exciting new ideas, will encourage students to find joy in becoming music literate.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The students of the targeted second grade class exhibit poor music reading skills which interfere with musical growth. Evidence of the existence of this problem includes both student assessment and teacher observation.

In order to document whether or not there is a need for increased music reading skills the researcher reviewed student surveys, prior graded work and prior student observations. All data collection methods focused on appropriate and accepted levels of musicianship typical for second grade students. In a survey (see Appendix A), students were asked to respond to seven questions by circling a face with a smile, with a frown, or with no expression. The following graph shows the percentage of positive, neutral, and negative answers circled by the students. Percentages in the upper row correspond to the control group (C); percentages in the lower correspond to the intervention group (I).

Survey Question	Group	Positive	Neutral	Negative
When I sing, I feel...	C	88%	12%	0%
	I	74%	18%	7%
When I play instruments, I feel. . .	C	70%	30%	0%
	I	82%	13%	5%
When I learn about "ta" and "ti ti", I feel. . .	C	45%	52%	3%
	I	68%	26%	5%
When I learn about Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do, I feel. . .	C	64%	24%	12%
	I	76%	13%	11%
When I come to Music Class, I feel. . .	C	79%	21%	0%
	I	87%	13%	0%
When I practice my handsigns, I feel. . .	C	48%	42%	9%
	I	63%	29%	8%
When I learn about the piano, I feel. . .	C	70%	30%	0%
	I	79%	16%	5%

Table 8 Student Survey C=Control Group, I=Intervention Group

Intervention Group

In the first question, students were asked how they feel when they sing. As the chart shows, 88% of the students responded positively, 12% of the students responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively. The second question focused on the playing of classroom instruments. In response, 70% of students responded positively, 30% responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively. Question number three focused on rhythm syllables "ta" and "ti it." In response, 45% of students responded positively, 52% responded neutrally, and 3% responded negatively. The next question about solfege syllables found 64% of students responding positively, 24% responding neutrally, and 12% responding negatively. When asked about coming to Music Class, 79% responded positively, 21% responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively. When asked about handsigns, 48% responded positively, 42% responded neutrally, and 9% responded negatively. The final question focused on use of the piano. The researcher found that 70% of

the students responded favorably to these questions, while 30% responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively.

Control Group

In the first question, students were asked how they feel when they sing. As the chart shows, 74% of the students responded positively, 18% responded neutrally, and 7% responded negatively. The second question focused on the playing of classroom instruments. In response, 82% of the students responded positively, 13% responded neutrally, and 5% responded negatively. Question number three focused on rhythm syllables "ta" and "ti ti." In response, 68% of students responded positively, 26% of students responded neutrally, and 5% responded negatively. The next question about solfege syllables found 76% of students responding favorably, 13% responded neutrally, and 11% responded negatively. When asked about coming to Music Class, 87% responded positively, 13% responded neutrally, and 0% responded negatively. When asked about handsigns, 63% of students responded favorably, 29% responded neutrally, and 8% responded negatively. The final question focused on use of the piano. The researcher found that 79% of the students responded favorably to these questions, 16% responded neutrally, and 5% responded negatively.

The survey shows that the majority of students enjoy coming to music class, singing, and playing instruments. However, when presented with questions more focused on music reading skills, students responded more apathetically. This apathy may be a problem, because if children are not interested in the methods used to teach music reading, there is little hope that they will ever be music literate. It is interesting to note that students in the intervention group responded

more positively than the control group on every question. The cause of this difference is not evident to the researcher.

Students in the targeted second grades were given a music reading pretest in order to document their music reading abilities prior to the intervention (see Appendix B). In this pretest, students were asked 11 questions. The first two questions asked children to identify rhythm patterns by using rhythm syllables "ta" and "ti ti" (Labuta & Smith, 1997). The next three questions focused on melodic contour. In this section, students were asked to identify a melody as going up, going down, or staying the same. Next, students were presented with two questions asking them to identify notes on the keyboard (Kostka & Payne, 1989). The following two questions involved Kodaly handsigns (Labuta & Smith, 1997). Students were to identify each one. The pretest concluded with two questions involving note placement on the staff (Kostka & Payne, 1989).

The chart below identifies each question and shows the scores of the control group and the intervention group per question.

Type and Number of Question	Control Group Percent correct	Intervention Group Percent correct
Rhythm Syllables (2)	82%	86%
Melodic Contour (3)	86%	80%
Keyboard Identification (2)	65%	78%
Kodaly Handsigns (2)	52%	26%
Note Placement on Staff (2)	69%	78%

Table 9 Pretest scores

Intervention Group

The first two questions of the pretest focused on rhythm syllables. The researcher found that 82% of the students answered these questions correctly, while 18% of the students responded incorrectly. When presented with three questions concerning melodic contour, 86% of the students answered correctly while 14% answered incorrectly. The following two

questions focused on keyboard identification. It was found that 65% of students answered correctly, while 35% responded incorrectly. When asked to identify Kodaly handsigns, 52% of students responded with the correct answer, while 47% responded with the incorrect answer. The final two questions focused on note placement on the staff. The researcher found that 69% of the students responded correctly, while 31% responded incorrectly.

As anticipated, there is room for student improvement, especially in the areas of handsign identification, and keyboard and staff familiarity. Although the students scored above average in the categories of rhythm syllables and melodic contour, the researcher assumes that further instruction in music reading would raise these scores.

Control Group

In the first two questions concerning rhythm syllables, 86% responded correctly, while 14% responded incorrectly. When presented with three questions about melodic contour, 80% of the students answered correctly, while 20% answered incorrectly. The following two questions focused on keyboard identification. It was found that 78% of students responded correctly, while 22% responded incorrectly. When asked to identify Kodaly handsigns, 26% responded correctly, while 74% responded incorrectly. The final two questions focused on note placement on the staff. The researcher found that 78% responded positively, while 22% responded negatively.

Probable Causes

There are several probable causes of the mediocrity of the students' grades. First, there is often a lack of teacher and student interest in music reading skills. Learning to read music for students is almost as difficult as teaching students to read music for teachers. Unfortunately,

things that are more difficult for teachers to teach and students to learn will often get "put on the back burner." Second, students often imitate and learn by rote when the teacher thinks they are actually reading music well. Students are not intentionally being deceitful; rather, both they and the teacher believe that the students are reading music. Third, music teachers are always faced with the problem of too much curriculum to teach and too little time in which to teach it. The only way to solve this problem is to make music literacy a priority.

CHAPTER III

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Every child should be able, because of his/her musical education, to make music function in his/her life both now and into the future (Thorn, 1929). In order for this ability to be achieved, students must have the tools with which to appreciate music for its own sake. In their book, How to Help Children Learn Music (1953), Madeleine Carabo-Cone and Beatrice Royt state that "the active enjoyment of music derived from personal participation is bound to be a more vital experience than the passive pleasure of uninformed listening" (p. 1). Thus, children who have been informed about music and who are able to participate on a personal level are more likely to enjoy the experience. In Music for Young Children Alice Thorn (1929) reminds the reader that "the chief concern of every person involved in music education is that each child should grow to adulthood equipped not only with his/her original musical enthusiasm, but with the desire and ability to increase musical experiences" (p. 1).

We must then ask ourselves, how do we enable students to personally enjoy musical experiences? The answer lies in the task of teaching students to read music. By giving students music reading skills early in life, we are actually empowering them for their futures. They can, in turn, take the sight-reading skills presented in elementary school and use them as a foundation

for future instruction in middle school, high school, and beyond. In Teaching Children to Read Music by Charles W. Hefferman (1968), the author states that the "learning of music reading permits one to study the literature of music without the presence of a teacher; learning may continue long after elementary school is over" (p. 86).

But why is this necessary? Why must students learn *how* to read music? Will they not enjoy music as non-readers? Experts say no, especially as they grow older. Carabo-Cone and Royt (1953) discuss this issue at length. "Kids may like to learn by rote, but this is short-lived and often leads to frustration when he/she can't cope with the complexities and coordination needed to read music". In Musical Learning, author Marion Flagg (1959) suggests that sight-reading is promoted, and students who can sight-read are admired. "Sight readers are so rare today, because of too much rote and too little independent reading. . . many people with good natural voices, an 'ear for music' and a desire to sing cannot read. . . the note reader is much sought after" (p. 152).

As children grow older, their learning is challenged with progressively difficult music. By fifth grade, many students are involved in elementary school band, orchestra, and/or choral programs. Even in these beginning programs, the level of difficulty of music presented will confuse the non-reader. One can only imagine how the non-reader will feel when he/she reaches middle school and high school. He/She will be asked to sort complex rhythms, sing difficult note intervals, and analyze musical scores. Without a solid foundation in sight-reading, the non-reader will be lost. It is acceptable to assume that this student will be frustrated, and will probably suffer some self-esteem issues. Perhaps he/she will even decide to quit the musical organization. This would be a tragedy, because perhaps these frustrated students are extremely talented and just haven't been given the appropriate academic foundation as young children.

This musical foundation is necessary because the study of music is valuable in itself, yet it is also valuable because every child should receive a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of instruction in school, and music and the arts must be included (Lehman, 1986). The arts develop children's creative and expressive potential (Merrion & Rubin, 1996). Furthermore, the Music Educators National Conference states that the role of music and the arts in civilization is so important because of their unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit (MENC).

When first presented with music reading, students will often find that the symbols of music are "hieroglyphics" (Carabo-Cone & Royt, 1953 p. 1). The reading of music involves the recognition of symbols that have no basis in a child's prior education. The symbols are, in effect, another language. This language takes on meaning for children as they see it and relate it to the music they already know, i.e., singing and playing classroom instruments. The task of the educator is to bridge the gap between what they know and what they need to know.

This bridging of the gap is the growth of musical knowledge. This ranges from the simplest rote response, pure ear-learning through experience, through a steadily growing grasp of relationships and their objectification in notation, until the eye can teach the ear (Flagg 1959).

The general music educator must be aware that not all children will be able to play violin, but he or she is responsible for being sure that they can play *something*. Many teachers fall into the easy way of "coaching" kids, instead of giving them the principles by which they may increasingly teach themselves. As stated by Flagg, "the ability to read and read well musically and fluently is a matter of approach and practice, both of which are the responsibility of the teacher" (p. 171).

Successful music reading at school includes multiple steps. The chart below illustrates the normal educational requirements (K-2) for both playing and creating music, according to Patrick O'Brien, author of Teaching Music (1983).

In playing music using instruments and/or voices:

*Children will use line notation for high and low pitches

*Children will read melodies by using scale degree numbers, pitch names, or syllables

*Children will use hand signs appropriately

*Children will use symbols for "ta" and "ti-ti" to represent patterns

*Children will be aware of how pitch and duration are notated

*Children will be able to scan music for melodic level and rhythmic value

In creating musical compositions:

*Children will create their own rhythmic and melodic patterns

*Children will create phrases

These guidelines are helpful, because they give teachers a place to start. However, to actually begin the process of teaching music reading and thus achieve these results, teachers first need to determine if their students are cognitively ready to learn these skills. O'Brien presents three stages students go through in becoming cognitively prepared for understanding and applying musical symbols and notation.

Enactive Stage	Students experience musical objects and ideas (i.e. playing instruments, singing, performing, etc.)
Iconic Stage	Students can mentally sort these objects and ideas into appropriate categories (i.e. high and low sounds, soft and loud sounds, etc.)
Symbolic Stage	Students are able to mentally deal with musical concepts after having previously experienced and categorized them

Table 10 Cognitive Stages

Once a teacher establishes that students are ready and able to learn music reading skills, he/she must decide the best method of teaching music reading. To begin with, it is necessary to undertake a survey of the most relevant and influential theorists of music education pertaining to music reading. Contemporary researchers have developed several methods of teaching music reading by drawing on the works of the following three theorists:

Zoltan Kodaly

Zoltan Kodaly (1882-1967) was a Hungarian-born composer, ethnomusicologist, and educator who was concerned about the state of music education in his homeland (Stolba, 1994). Kodaly was interested in native Hungarian folk music and began a life-long crusade to collect, analyze, classify, and popularize his country's folk music (Jorgensen, 1997). Kodaly worked to create a society of musically literate people in his homeland, and his philosophy, principles, and goals gradually evolved into the Hungarian way of music education. This philosophy included six primary points: (1) Everyone who is capable of developing language literacy is capable of developing music literacy; (2) singing is the best and most natural practical, and effective means of acquiring musicianship; (3) to be most effective, music education must begin when children are very young; (4) children's "mother tongue" should serve as the foundation of early

instruction; (5) music teaching should use only repertoire of the highest quality; and (6) music should be a core subject in school curricula (Labuta & Smith, 1997).

The pedagogy known as the Kodaly method, or "singing method," grew from his ideas and philosophy. The nature of the curriculum is primarily of his design, but the instructional techniques used to attain the curriculum's musical objectives were borrowed from a variety of sources (Brown, 1987). Under this curriculum, the method by which students learn to read and write music is called *relative sol-fa* and was derived from the tonic sol-fa system developed and used by John Curwen in England sometime after 1840. This "solfege" method uses the moveable- rather than the fixed-do system, and pitches are represented by their initial letter (d=do, r=re, m=mi, etc.) (Labuta & Smith, 1997).

Kodaly parted from Curwen's system for rhythmic notation. Instead, he used stems without note heads and rhythm syllables derived from French pedagogue Emile Cheve. He also adopted Curwen's hand signals, or handsigns (see Appendix C). These handsigns were designed to communicate the tendencies of pitches as they are normally used in musical contexts. Also, the method uses vertically arranged syllables resembling a ladder, which was popularized by Sarah Glover in England. This ladder reinforces the visual representation of pitches and their relationships to other notes of the scale.

Kodaly's pedagogical approach is designed to accommodate young children's musical, mental, and physical needs, and the entire approach is developmental and sequential. Musical elements are experienced and thoroughly internalized before a new element is presented. Finally, Kodaly composed hundreds of exercises and compositions for use with his pedagogy.

Kodaly lived to see his work recognized nationally and internationally. His methodology was replicated in educational systems around the world and became a major influence in current music education curricula (Labuta and Smith, 1997).

Carl Orff

German-born composer Carl Orff (1895-1982) did not set out to create a general music pedagogy. His music theories grew from his interest in theater, folk music, ancient tragedy, and Baroque music. The work that eventually led to the development of *schulwerke* began in 1924 when he co-founded the Guntherschule in 1924 with dancer Dorothee Gunther. This primary school's main objective was to explore and teach new relationships between dance and music that were becoming very popular. This movement was known as "The New Dance Wave."

Orff believed that rhythm was the most important aspect of music, and he felt that music, movement, and speech were inseparable. This concept became the basis for his *elemental music* or *recapitulation theory* of music development. Orff's theory states that "each person's music development progresses through stages comparable to the development of music through history—from primal, rudimentary, rhythmic music making to the more sophisticated and refine music making of today" (p. 113). Therefore, the phrase *elemental music* refers to the starting point for musical development and the manner in which people musically express themselves at various stages of development (Brown, 1987).

Orff advocated beginning music instruction at a very young age, and he believed that music education should be active, participatory, and group-oriented. With *schulwerke*, children's musical experiences use games and playlike activities to explore sounds, rhythms,

melodies, etc. The teacher is consciously preparing the students for future music learning, and using individual creativity in spontaneous music making is essential.

A logical starting point for instruction is rhythm, combined with speech and simple melodies. The specially constructed instruments used in the Orff method were developed as an extension of this *elemental music* theory. Orff's instruments include melodic percussion, such as glockenspiels, metallophones, and xylophones; timpani, hand drums, and other percussion instruments; recorders; and simple stringed instruments (Labuta & Smith, 1997), as well as their counterparts from other cultures (Volk, 1998). These instruments provide students a way to explore music by making music. Orff believed that exploring these instruments and using the singing voice were essential to optimal musical development. His approach to music education is sequential and developmental, and students must master each concept before a new concept is presented (Labuta & Smith 1997).

Orff collaborated with Gunild Keetman, a former student of the Guntherschule, in 1926. This partnership led to the publication of *Musik for Kinder* (Music for Children), and multi-volume set of materials designed for use with the Orff pedagogy. This work led to widespread implementation of the Orff method, or the "instrument method" which is used internationally in music education curricula (Labuta & Smith, 1997).

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze

Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950) developed an educational philosophy called Dalcroze Eurythmics, which describes the study of music through rhythm (Kennedy, 1994). Complete implementation requires the use of solfege, improvisation, and rhythmic movement. Dalcroze believed that the use of his philosophy would aid students in using their physical and

intellectual powers and would ultimately help them enhance self-knowledge and self-awareness. He maintained that his approach to music education was intended to educate the whole person (Brown, 1987).

After accepting a position as professor of harmony and solfege at the Conservatory in Geneva, Switzerland, Dalcroze became dismayed at the inability of his students to sing in tune or write creative pieces. He taught his students to "become" the music in order to create music for self-expression. Dalcroze created many compositions and exercises to help facilitate this expression (Brown, 1987).

Due to the importance that Dalcroze placed on kinesthesia, it is not surprising that this became the foundation of his pedagogy. Learning objectives are (1) developing attention, (2) converting this attention into concentration, (3) developing an awareness of personal responses to music, other's responses to music, and musical organization and events, (4) developing awareness of which modes of response are most appropriate in a given context, and (5) developing ability to respond to physical flexibility with musical ability. Once students have mastered rhythmic movement, Dalcroze pedagogy seeks to help them internalize how movements feel, look, and sound. This *inner hearing* helps to develop kinesthetic imagination and memory (Labuta & Smith, 1997). Furthermore, this *inner hearing* provides a solid foundation for future instruction in the more advanced skills of sightsinging and ear training.

The primary objective of the Dalcroze pedagogy is to develop skill in combining movement, sound, and dynamics in imaginative, spontaneous, and personally expressive ways. The Dalcroze pedagogy came to the attention of music educators in 1905, and is now used throughout the world. Dalcroze's ideas for music instruction and human expression have had

long-term impacts on dance, rhythmic theory, and on music pedagogy in general (Labuta & Smith, 1997).

Several contemporary scholars have drawn on elements of these three theorists and implemented them in their own music reading curricula. For example, in her book Music Reading for Young Children, Florence Windebank (1966) outlines a program for teaching music reading that parallels the teaching of language reading. Like Kodaly, she believes that language literacy is a pre-cursor to music literacy. She bases her program on spelling. For example, she reminds the reader that children are originally taught to read by first learning letters and sounds. Students are then taught to put these together to form words. According to Windebank, such is the same for music. By putting notes together and learning what they sound like, one can create song.

David J. Elliott, author of Music Matters presents another method of music reading (1995). Elliott believes that music reading is simply "the ability to encode and decode musical sound patterns in staff notation, graphic notation, handsigns, or rhythmic syllables" (p. 61). Elliott's theory does not support an active music reading curriculum and does not promote specialized instruction in music reading. Instead, the author describes a system based on the teaching of all-around musicianship, with music reading skills taking a minor role. Elliott's use of staff notation, graph notation, handsigns and rhythmic syllables parallel the Kodaly method. Elliott believes that music reading skills should take a minor role, yet Kodaly's theory suggests that music reading skills are valued and appreciated.

A third method of teaching music reading is found in the targeted second grade music class' textbook. This textbook series, The Music Connection by Silver Burdett and Ginn (1998), establishes a curriculum with a strong emphasis on solfege syllables, rhythm syllables, and

rhythmic movement. This curriculum also focuses heavily on the use of classroom instruments. The Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze theories are implemented in this textbook series. Kodaly's rhythm syllables and sol-fa system are used throughout all grade levels, many songs used in the series have Orff-inspired classroom percussion accompaniments included, and the dance activities used in the series are based on Dalcroze Eurythmics.

The final method of teaching music reading to be discussed is outlined by Hefferman (1968). In his book, the author describes an Orff-based approach to teaching music—using the keyboard.

> The use of the Keyboard is one of the most important steps in the development of music reading ability. Kids need to have access to pianos and should be able to manipulate and experience the keyboard. Keyboard [usage] helps in that students can begin to associate a certain pitch with a note on a specific line or space, a handsign, etc., and their reading ability will progress all the faster. (p.73)

After reviewing the Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze methods and studying current music reading practices, the researcher will incorporate aspects of Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze, Hefferman, and the Silver Burdett and Ginn music curriculum into the study. In the intervention group, the researcher will use Kodaly's solfege syllables (also used by Dalcroze), rhythm syllables and handsigns to teach music reading skills. The researcher will also implement the use of keyboard training, drawing on the use of classroom instruments as described in the Orff method and the keyboard used in the Hefferman model of teaching music reading. Students in the intervention group will also use their skills in creating their own compositions. Susan H. Kenney (1997) states that teachers should "encourage compositions. . .and begin to help children understand traditional notation" (p. 130). In the control group, the researcher will continue using the Silver

Burdett and Ginn district-wide curriculum already in place. As previously stated, this curriculum uses aspects of the Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze theories.

Project Objectives and Processes

As a result of integrating keyboard use into the music reading curriculum during the period of January 1999 to April 1999, the targeted second grade classes will increase music reading skills, as measured by teacher-constructed tests and student-created compositions.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Materials that foster knowledge of the keyboard will be developed.
2. A series of learning activities that address music reading will be developed.

Project Action Plan

Due to the staggered schedules of the classes involved in the intervention, actual dates are not included in the following weekly summary of the project action plan.

Intervention Group

Week One	Music Attitudes survey was given to students.
Week Two	Students took music reading pretest.
Week Three	Students learned black key versus white key placement with the aid of a keyboard.
Week Four	Students learned black key versus white key placement with the aid of a keyboard.
Week Five	Students learned names of piano keys with the aid of a keyboard.
Week Six	Students added handsigns and solfege syllables to their keyboard skills.

Week Seven	Students began rhythm studies.
Week Eight	Students combined rhythm, handsigns, syllables and keyboards.
Week Nine	Students began compositions.
Week Ten	Students finished compositions.
Week Eleven	Students took posttest.

Table 11 Intervention Group Action Plan

Control Group

Week One	Music Attitudes survey was given to students.
Week Two	Students took music reading pretest.
Weeks Three & Four	Students began rhythm studies in the form of chant.
Weeks Five & Six	Students paired rhythm patterns with simple melodies.
Week Seven & Eight	Students sang simple melodies using handsigns and solfege syllables.
Week Nine & Ten	Students combined rhythm patterns, handsigns, and syllables in song.
Week Eleven	Students took posttest.

Table 12 Control Group Action Plan

Methods of Assessment

In order to assess the effects of the intervention, pretests and posttests were used. Students in the intervention group were asked to create their own compositions, which were assessed by the teacher.

CHAPTER IV

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The objective of this project was to improve music reading scores among second grade students.

Intervention Group

Students in the intervention group were given a Music Attitudes survey (see Appendix A) during the first week of the intervention. Results of that survey can be found in Table 8 on page 11. During week two of the intervention, students took the music reading pretest. Results of that test can be found in Table 9 on page 12. In weeks three and four, students were given individual keyboards to manipulate. During these weeks, students were taught about the organization of the keyboard; for example, students were instructed in black key groupings of two and three and looked at how they fit with the white keys of the keyboard. During week five, students used their keyboards to learn the names of the piano keys using the musical alphabet of A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. In week six, students used their prior learning of Kodaly handsigns (see Appendix C) and solfege syllables (Do, Re, Mi, etc.) and applied them to their current study of the keyboard.

For example, when practicing a song such as "Hot Cross Buns," students first used solfege syllables to sing the song.

Hot Cross Buns (Mi Re Do)
Hot Cross Buns (Mi Re Do)
One a pen-ny (Do Do Do Do)
Two a pen-ny (Re Re Re Re)
Hot Cross Buns (Mi Re Do)

Then, the students used the corresponding handsigns while singing. Finally, students used their keyboards to "play" the notes of the song while singing.

In week seven, students learned about rhythm syllables "ta" (corresponds to a quarter note) and "ti ti" (corresponds to a pair of eighth notes). Students were able to use these rhythm syllables to decipher the rhythm of simple songs, such as "Rain Rain Go Away" or "Miss White Had a Fright" (*The Music Connection*, 1998).

In week eight, students combined their skills of rhythm, handsigns, syllables, and keyboards. They worked on taking short songs such as "Merrily We Roll Along" and counting out the rhythm using "ta" and "ti ti," singing the song using solfege syllables, using Kodaly handsigns to illustrate the melody of the song, and playing the song on their keyboards.

In weeks nine and ten, students used their knowledge to write their compositions. They started by constructing the melody. The students wrote the order of the notes they wanted to use on sheets of paper. They then practiced playing the melody on their keyboard. The students were instructed on keeping the notes relatively close together for ease in singing and continuity of line. After they had the melody sketched out, the students were instructed to create the lyrics of the song. After they had written the lyrics, they worked with a partner to put the lyrics in the form of "ta"s and "ti ti"s. Once the rhythm was completed, the researcher worked with each student individually to correct mistakes and "clean up" the piece. When the pieces were

finished, the researcher transferred each piece to staff paper. The most creative of these compositions are found in Appendix D.

In week eleven, students took the posttest. The results of this test are shown in Table 13 on page 31.

Control Group

Students in the control group were given a Music Attitudes survey (see Appendix A) during the first week of the study. Results of that survey can be found in Table 8. During week two of the study, students took the music reading pretest. Results of that test can be found in Table 9. In weeks three and four, students studied rhythm using short chants, such as "Rain, Rain, Go Away" or "Pease Porridge Hot (*The Music Connection*, 1998). By using rhythm syllables such as "ta" or "ti ti," students were able to work with a partner to decipher the chant patterns. Chants were spoken with words, spoken with rhythm syllables, and clapped. In weeks five and six, students took their rhythm skills and combine them with simple melodies. For example, "Rain, Rain, Go Away," which had previously been taught as a chant, was then taught as a song. During weeks seven and eight, students took their chants and melodies and added Kodaly handsigns and solfege syllables. By the end of week eight, students were able to take a simple melody such as "Pease Porridge Hot" and chant it using rhythm syllables, chant it using lyrics, sing it using solfege syllables, sing it using lyrics, and sing it using Kodaly handsigns. In weeks nine and ten, new material was introduced to students in this group, such as "Bow Wow Wow" and "Knock the Cymbals" (*The Music Connection*, 1998). The students worked in cooperative groups to decipher the rhythm syllables, solfege syllables, and Kodaly handsigns for

each song. In week eleven, students took the posttest. The results of this test are shown in Table 14, shown below.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of keyboard study on students' music reading ability, students in both the control group and the intervention group took a posttest identical to the pretest at the conclusion of the intervention. In the tables below, student pretest scores are compared per question with student posttest scores in both the control group and the intervention group.

Intervention Group

Type and Number of Question	Pretest Percent correct	Posttest Percent correct
Rhythm Syllables (2)	86%	91%
Melodic Contour (3)	80%	83%
Keyboard Identification (2)	78%	85%
Kodaly Handsigns (2)	26%	51%
Note Placement on the Staff (2)	78%	92%

Table 13 Intervention Group Pretest and Posttest scores

Control Group

Type and Number of Question	Pretest Percent correct	Posttest Percent correct
Rhythm Syllables (2)	82%	75%
Melodic Contour (3)	86%	81%
Keyboard Identification (2)	65%	67%
Kodaly Handsigns (2)	52%	44%
Note Placement on the Staff (2)	69%	83%

Table 14 Control Group Pretest and Posttest scores

Intervention Group

In the first two questions dealing with rhythm syllables, 86 percent of students in the intervention group answered the questions correctly on the pretest, while 91 percent answered

the questions correctly on the posttest. The second three questions focused on melodic contour. On the pretest, 80 percent of the students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 83 percent of the students answered correctly. On the next two questions about keyboard identification, 78 percent of the students answered correctly on the pretest, while 85 percent answered correctly on the posttest. The next two questions focused on Kodaly handsigns. On the pretest, 26 percent of the students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 51 percent answered correctly. The last two questions focused on note placement on the staff. On the pretest, 78 percent of students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 92 percent of students answered correctly.

Control Group

In the first two questions dealing with rhythm syllables, 82 percent of students in the control group answered the questions correctly on the pretest, while 75 percent answered the questions correctly on the posttest. The second three questions focused on melodic contour. On the pretest, 86 percent of the students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 81 percent of the students answered correctly. On the next two questions about keyboard identification, 65 percent of students answered correctly on the pretest, while 67 percent answered correctly on the posttest. The next two questions focused on Kodaly handsigns. On the pretest, 52 percent of the students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 44 percent answered correctly. The last two questions focused on note placement on the staff. On the pretest, 69 percent of students answered correctly, while on the posttest, 83 percent of students answered correctly.

The intervention had a positive effect on student music reading abilities. Of note is that the regular curriculum appears to have had a detrimental effect on rhythm skills and melodic contour recognition among members of the control group.

Students in the intervention group created their own compositions, which were reviewed and rewritten by the music teacher. The most creative of these compositions are presented in Appendix B.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data from the music reading posttest, the students in the intervention group showed marked improvement in all areas of music reading. The emphasis on keyboard study which students in the intervention group experienced appears to have transferred into the other areas of music literacy. This transfer of knowledge led to students in this group to create their own compositions, a difficult task for a second grader.

In reviewing the data for this study, one must acknowledge the gains made by the students in the intervention group. Keyboard training positively effected students' music reading abilities. However, the scores of the control group are curious and warrant further research. It would be a mistake to discontinue use of a proven textbook series based on this singular study. In making recommendations for future use of this study, the researcher would attempt to include more technology, perhaps by using keyboarding software. In addition, the staggered schedules of students' music programs were found to be disruptive. It would be in the best interests of both student and researcher if music programs were scheduled around the study, thus ensuring continuity. Also, it would be interesting to research a pairing of the two methods to determine if even higher music reading scores could be achieved.

This study was very successful in that the students in the intervention group made significant gains in their music reading abilities. In the future, it would be beneficial to implement the study for the entire school year, thus ensuring that a significant amount of time would be devoted to increasing music reading skills.

References

Benward, B., Carr, M., & Kolosick, J. T. (1992). Introduction to Sightsinging and Ear Training. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.

Brown, A. (1987). Approaches to classroom music for children. In J. C. Peery, I. W. Peery, & T. W. Draper (Eds.), Music and Child Development (pp.186-189). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Carabo-Cone, M., & Royt, B. (1953). How to Help Children Learn Music. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Elliott, D. J. (1995). Music Matters: A New Philosophy of Music Education. New York: Oxford University Press.

Flagg, M. (1959). Musical Learning: A Guide to Child Growth. Boston: C. C. Birchard & Company.

Garretson, R. L. (1993). Conducting Choral Music (7th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Heffernan, C.W. (1968). Teaching Children to Read Music. New York: Meredith Corporation.

Hoffer, C. R. (1991). Teaching Music in the Secondary Schools (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Inc.

Illinois Department of Education. (1998). 1998 School Report Card.

Junda, M. E. (1994, September). The development of music reading skills. Music Educators Journal, 81/2, 37-41.

Jorgensen, E. R. (1997). In Search of Music Education. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Kennedy, M. (1994). The Oxford Dictionary of Music. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kenney, S. H. (1997). Music in the developmentally appropriate integrated classroom. In C. H. Hart, D. C. Burts, & R. Charlesworth (Eds.), Integrated Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Birth to Age Eight (pp.129-130). Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Kostka, S. & Payne, D. (1989). Tonal Harmony. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Labuta, J. A., & Smith, D. A. (1997). Music Education: Historical Contexts and Perspectives. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Lehman, P. R. (1986). Who Cares About Quality in Education? Reston, VA: Music Educators National Conference.

Merrion, M. D. & Rubin, J. E. (1996). Creative Approaches to Elementary Curriculum. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Music Educators National Conference. "The K-12 National Standards, Pre-K Standards, and what they mean to music educators." <http://www.menc.org/publication/books/prek12st.html> (2 November 1999).

O'Brien, J. P. (1983). Teaching Music. New York: CBS College Publishing.

Sims, W.L. (1995, April). Children's ability to demonstrate music concept discriminations in singing and listening. Journal of Research in Music Education, 43, 204-221.

Stolba, K. M. (1994). The Development of Western Music. Dubuque, IA: Brown and Benchmark.

The Music Connection (2nd ed.). (1998). Parsippany, NJ: Silver Burdett & Ginn.

Thomson, W. (1966). Introduction to Music Reading Concepts and Applications. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Thorn, A. J. (1929). Music for Young Children. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Volk, T. M. (1998). Music, Education, and Multiculturalism: Foundations and Principles. New York: Oxford University Press.

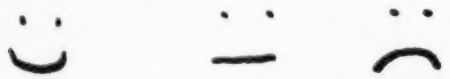
Windebank, F. (1966). Music Reading for Young Children. London: Novello & Company.

Appendix A
Music Attitudes Survey

Name _____
Class Code _____

Directions: Circle the face that shows me how you feel about each question.

1. When I sing, I feel…



2. When I play instruments, I feel…

3. When I learn about TAs and TI TIs (♩ and ♫), I feel…

4. When I learn about DO RE MI FA SOL LA TI DO, I feel…

5. When I come to Music Class, I feel…

6. When I practice my handsigns, I feel…

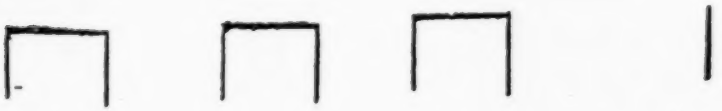
7. When I learn about the piano, I feel…

Appendix B
Music Reading Skills Pretest/Posttest

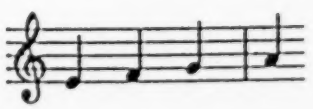
Name _____
Class Code _____

1. Write the "Ta"s and "Ti Ti"s under each example.

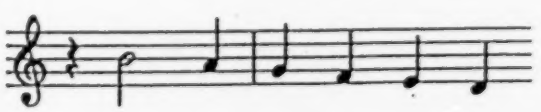
a.

b. 

2. Does this song go up, go down or stay the same? _____



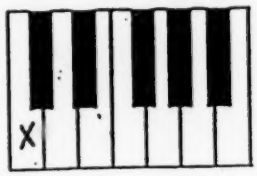
3. Does this song go up, go down, or stay the same? _____



4. Does this song go up, go down, or stay the same? _____

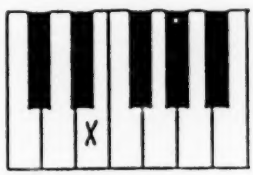
5. Circle the name of this piano note.

C D L



6. Circle the name of this piano note.

C E R



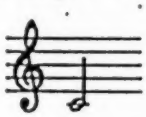
7. Circle the name of this handsign.

Sol Re Mi

8. Circle the name of this handsign.

Do Re Mi

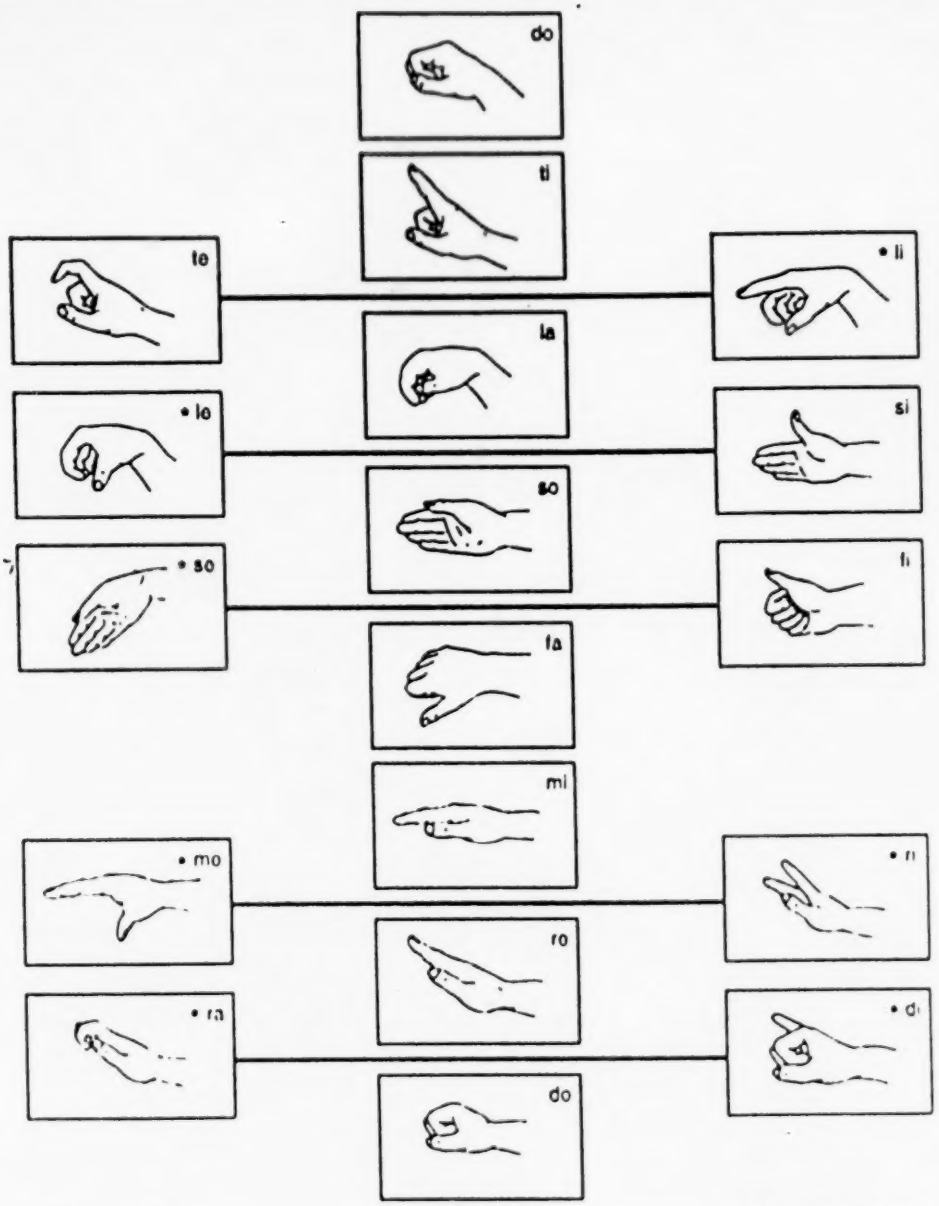
9. Would you sing this note high or low? _____



10. Would you sing this note high or low? _____

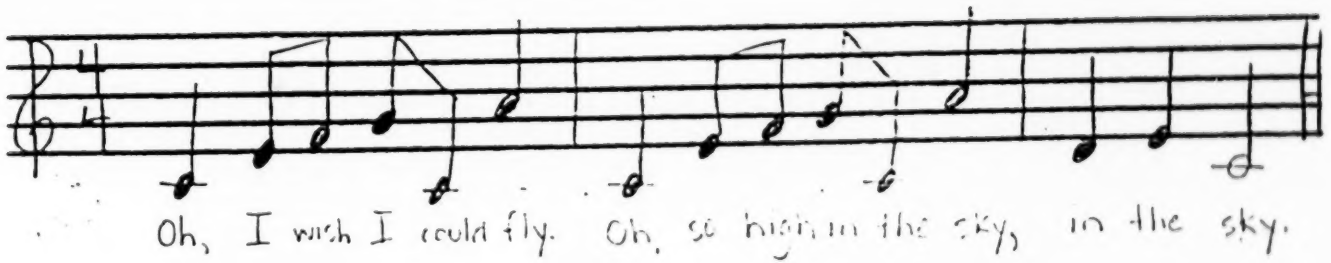
Great Job! Love, Miss Kinate

Appendix C
Kodaly Handsigns

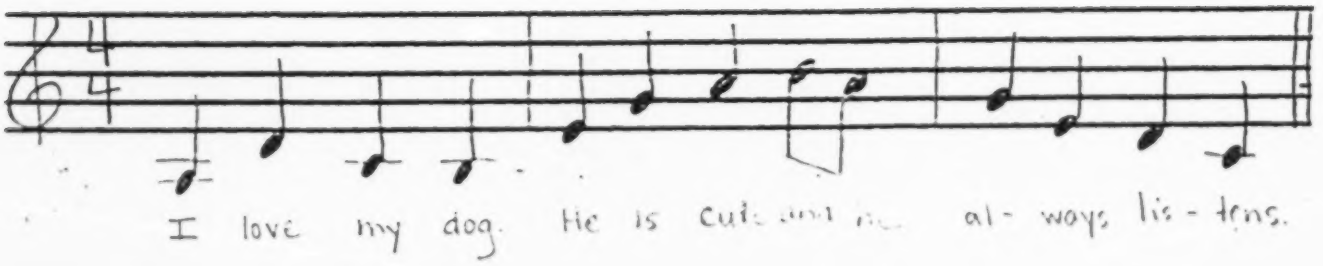


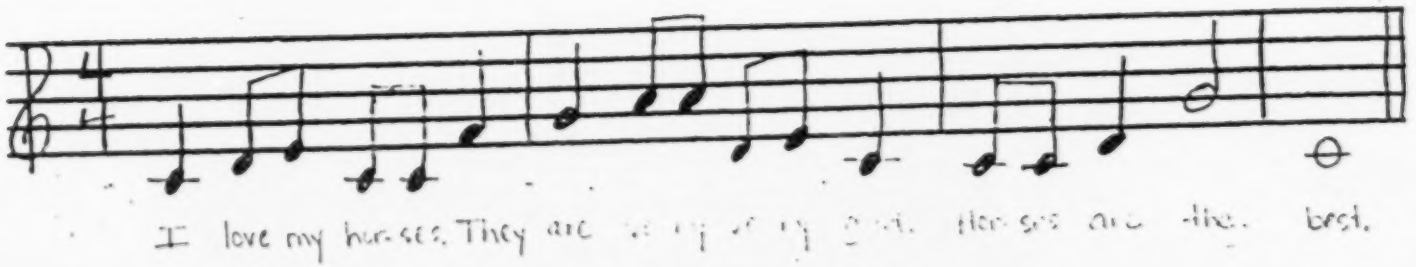
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

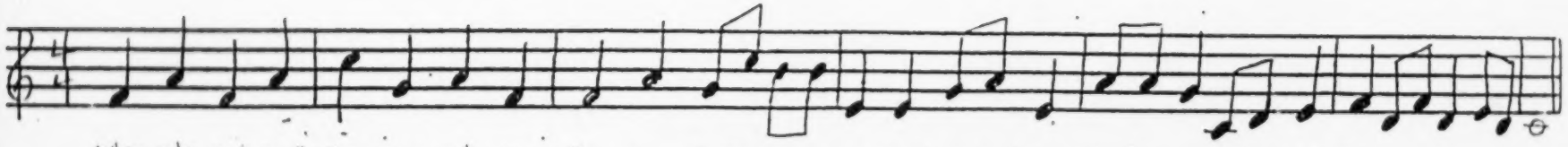
Appendix D
Samples of Student Compositions

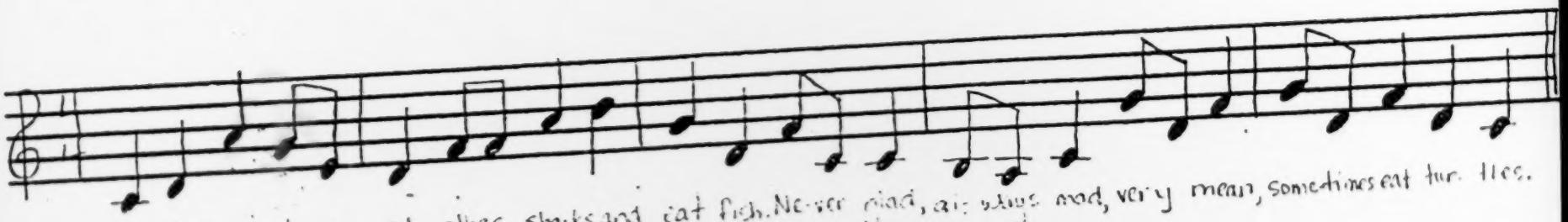


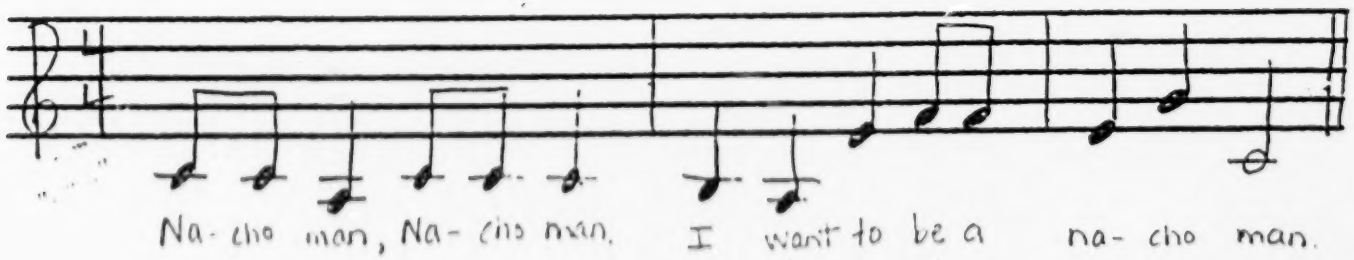
BEST COPY AVAILABLE



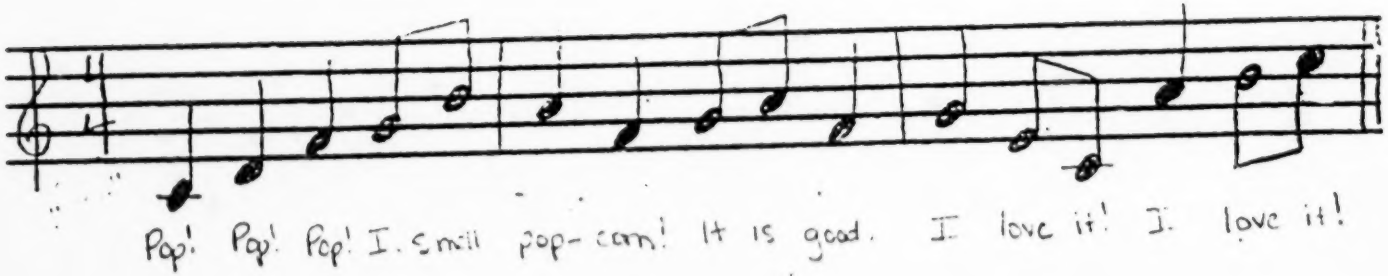
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE


When cats are small they come out in the dark. By the shining moon light sat eat the fishfood in gar-bage cans. They also eat apple cores.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE